Environmental Pollution by Public Sector Units in Assam

1731. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that some public sector industrial units in Nowgong and upper Assam districts have been creating environmental pollution and doing damage to agricultural land;

(b) whether it is a fact that Assam Government keep sending SOS to the Central Government for adopting protective measures in this regard; and

(c) if so, what is Central Government's reaction thereto and what steps are being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Action taken in this regard are as follows:

1. Based on the studies carried out and the suggestion made by the Central Pollution Control Board, the following measures have been adopted by ONGC:

(i) Steps have been taken to contain oil and drilling mud from entering the receiving waters.

(ii) Effluent treatment plant is in operation at Lakwa group gathering station. Similar plants at Rudrasagar and Geleki Oil Stations are under construction.

(iii) Regular monitoring of the impact of oil field activity on the surface and sub-surface water resources is being carried out.

(iv) Air quality monitoring is being done in operational areas.

2. At Namrup, Hindustan Fertiliser Corporation has provided urea-hydrolyser striper of adequate capacity for their unit No. 3 of the new plant, Pollution control plan for the old plant is under implementation and is scheduled to be completed towards November, 1988.

3. The Oil Refinery of Indian Oil Corporation at Digboi is under revamping and a new effluent treatment plant is proposed. They have been directed by the Central Board to provide treatment to their effluents to conform to the minimal national standards.

4. The unit of Hindustan Paper Corporation at Nowgong has a full fledged treatment plant for treating their industrial effluents and the treated effluents are discharged through a long pipeline into a tributary of the river Brahmaputra.

Per Capita Forest Area

1732. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the per capita forest area in India at present;

(b) whether it is much lower than that in other countries of the world, and

(c) whether it is a fact that Government have noticed gross inadequacies in planning in forestry and that drastic changes in policy and strategy are in the offing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) The per capita area under forest cover in India is about 0.08 hectare.

(b) It is lower than some countries.

(c) Government are continuously reviewing the policies, strategies and planning for forestry and taking corrective steps.